DNP PROJECT & PRACTICUM

PLANNING PACKET

Please review all materials in this document thoroughly.

Last updated 10.3.2018
DNP PROJECT & PRACTICUM
These guidelines, policies, and procedures provide the necessary information and materials for the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) project and practicum.

NOTE: Handbook updates will be announced periodically. Updated policies replace old policies unless noted otherwise. Students will be held to the standards of the most up to date version of this planning packet.
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INTRODUCTION

Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students must complete a DNP project. The DNP project should have a healthcare outcome focus that includes evaluation or implementation of policy, services, or practice innovation at the program, organizational, regional, or national level. This project should demonstrate sustainability and act as a foundation for future nursing practice. The DNP project provides the student with the ability to independently lead a practice change project and demonstrate competencies pertaining to advanced leadership and translation of evidence into practice. These competencies include thorough investigation of health care issues, scholarship synthesis, and implementation of change. The DNP project provides evidence and synthesis of student learning outcomes (SLOs) while contributing to the improvement of advanced clinical practice. Examples of DNP projects are available at The National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) and Doctor of Nursing Practice.

The focus of the selected project should be relevant to a current or emerging healthcare issue and be within the scope of practice for a DNP-prepared professional. The project provides the foundation for future DNP level leadership and scholarship in practice, translating evidence into practice improvements and improving outcomes of care.

The project is formulated, implemented, and evaluated through a combination of six seminar and practicum courses. A minimum of 576 total hours (192 hours per semester) will be allocated to the DNP project practicum experiences. The DNP project courses are designed to help students assimilate and synthesize knowledge for advanced nursing practice at a high level of complexity.
GENERAL GUIDELINES

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The student is responsible for identifying an appropriate location and Preceptor for the DNP project and practicum experiences. The following are the guidelines for establishing and securing the practicum experience.

PRACTICUM APPLICATION

The student will complete the practicum application located at the end of this document. The student will submit the application to the DNP Academic Counselor as instructed below:

- One year prior to beginning the DNP project and practicum experiences (NURS 710 & NURS 713), the DNP student will submit the practicum application to the DNP Academic Counselor with the name and contact information for their selected DNP Preceptor and site. Deadlines for contacting the DNP Academic Counselor with this can be found on page 16 of this packet. If the student fails to contact the DNP Academic Counselor via email during this time frame, the student will be required to re-track the practicum experience on an availability basis.
- The DNP Academic Counselor must be notified immediately by the student of any changes to their practicum. The student must then meet with the DNP Academic Counselor to revise and approve a new plan of study and sequence of courses.
- Once the DNP Academic Counselor approves and confirms the student’s DNP Preceptor and site, the student will be assigned their DNP Project Chair. The student must contact their DNP Project Chair by the deadlines listed on page 16.

IDENTIFYING DNP PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS

Upon acceptance to the NIU DNP program, the student should begin identifying and assembling their DNP Project Team. Students will be assigned their Project Chair by the DNP Academic Counselor the semester prior to enrolling in NURS 710 & 713. Additionally, students will need to identify a DNP Project Preceptor and DNP Project Expert.

The DNP Project Team will include three professionals from the following areas:

- DNP Project Chair (assigned): A doctorally prepared NIU School of Nursing faculty member. The Project Chair will preferably be a DNP.
- DNP Project Practicum Preceptor: Preferably doctorally prepared Preceptor (see Preceptor selection criteria).
- DNP Project Expert: A master’s level or higher prepared professional. Should have special expertise or knowledge in the student’s project focus (vitae documentation required).

The DNP Project Team should be consulted regularly to offer insight, feedback, and guidance to the DNP student. The DNP Project Team will facilitate the students’ project and assist with access to resources required for the student to complete his or her project.

The student will secure their DNP Project Team by completing the DNP Project Team Agreement Form and submitting it to their Project Chair for final approval. Once approved, the Project Chair will submit the agreement to the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies. Completion of this
form, with all necessary signatures is due by week 8, the semester prior to enrolling in NURS 710 & NURS 713. The student will find this form at the end of this planning packet.

APPROVED ACTIVITIES FOR PRACTICUM HOURS TO MEET DNP ESSENTIAL OUTCOMES

The following practicum activities represent examples of approved practices congruent with the “DNP Essential Outcomes”. The DNP student may propose activities not enumerated here. DNP students must receive approval of their proposed practicum hours from their DNP Project Chair. Hours must be spent on practicum related activities. Required coursework cannot be used towards practicum hours.

Essential I (Scientific Underpinnings for Practice)
- Attend conference associated with EBP focus of project
- Review, appraise, and report scientific literature for project

Essential II (Organizational & Systems Leadership for Quality)
- Attend QI meeting
- Develop and review budget
- Develop business plan
- Develop and present SWOT analysis
- Identify and collaborate with stakeholders
- Assess cultural diversity and disparities within organization
- Implement cultural/diversity awareness interventions
- Identify need for rapid cycle improvement project
- Implement and evaluate rapid cycle improvement project
- Present at QI meeting

Essential III (Scholarship & Analytic Methods EBP)
- Serve as abstract reviewer
- Serve as consultant for collaborative research
- Complete core measure training
- Attend DNP project meetings
- Participate in data collection
- Participate in data analysis
- Consult with statistician
- Develop DNP project proposal
- Implement DNP project
- Conduct DNP project evaluation/analysis
- Disseminate DNP project findings
- Prepare final DNP project manuscript
- Attend grant writing training
- Construct, revise, submit IRB proposal
- Develop sustainability tools (e.g. toolkits, power-points, audit tools)
- Prepare grant proposal

Essential IV (Information Systems/Technology & Patient Care Technology Improvement of Health Care)
- Perform data extraction activities from large data sets
- Design mobile application for health care
- Design web accessible training material
o Evaluate a health care mobile application
o Participate in health information technology as evaluator or team member/leader
o Evaluate web-accessible educational material

**Essential V (Health Care Policy for Advocacy)**
- Meet with elected official or government committee for health policy review
- Participate on health committee at local, state, national or international level
- Analyze, propose, or provide testimony on health policy
- Participate on committee at institutional level

**Essential VI (Inter-professional Collaboration for Improving Patient/Population Outcomes)**
- Consult with mentor/preceptor regarding project
- Participate as consultant or member in inter-professional team
- Consult with subject matter content experts
- Participate as leader of an inter-professional team

**Essential VII (Clinical Prevention & Population Health for Improving the Nation’s Health)**
- Analyze epidemiologic data
- Collect epidemiologic data
- Work with county health department for implementation of health program
- Identify gaps in care for individuals, communities, or specific populations
- Implement and evaluate specific health promotion/disease prevention intervention at the city, county, or state level

**Essential VIII (Advanced Nursing Practice)**
- Assess clients, populations, or organizations in practice setting
- Implement EBP therapeutic intervention in practice setting
- Meet in consultation with experts in nursing practice
- Present/disseminate EBP knowledge as mentor to other health care professionals
- Other activities approved by faculty member

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**COURSE FACULTY & DNP PROJECT CHAIR ROLES**

Northern Illinois University School of Nursing faculty integrate the roles of educator, facilitator, organizer, collaborator, role model, mentor, and counselor. To ensure effective communication throughout the DNP course of study, individual course faculty may communicate by email and telephone to provide support for the student and the student’s Preceptor. Personal face-to-face meetings can also be arranged. Course faculty will be responsible for final evaluation of student learning outcomes for course work, practicum, and project.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Meet with the student the semester prior to beginning project and practicum courses
- In coordination with the DNP Academic Counselor, communicate with the student and assist in completing the required site and Preceptor application in order to coordinate the practicum site and Preceptor agreements
- Define DNP competencies / learning objectives in each practicum course.
- Works with the student and assists in helping the student remain on track for meeting the DNP project goals
- Collaborate with student and Preceptor during course to ensure student is tracked to meet objectives
- Enhance, assist, and coordinate learning opportunities
- Evaluate academic performance throughout program
- Provide instruction and evaluation for courses/educational experiences
- Facilitate and maintain communication with student and Preceptor
- Address concerns from practicum site, Preceptor or student
- Maintain profession, respectful, and non-discriminatory behaviors and standards

**DNP ACADEMIC COUSELOR ROLE**

- Assist the student in selecting and approving Practicum Preceptor and site
- Evaluate and approve practicum site, Preceptor, and goals for congruence with DNP learning outcomes
- Act as mediator between Northern Illinois University and the student’s practicum site
- Negotiate practicum contracts and letters of agreement with agency and Preceptor
- Confirm student compliance with site requirements prior to the practicum courses
- Facilitate the process of changing Preceptor(s) when requested by a student and the approved by faculty member
- Follow up with Preceptors, students, and faculty regarding practicum experiences
PRECEPTOR, EXPERT, & SITE GUIDELINES

MAKING PLANS FOR A PRECEPTOR & PRACTICUM SITE

Students will complete and submit the Project Site Planning Form and Preceptor Planning Form to the DNP Academic Counselor. After preliminary review and approval of the site and Preceptor, the DNP Academic Counselor will assign the student’s DNP Project Chair. Students will need to schedule an appointment to meet with their Project Chair during the first 8 weeks of the semester prior to enrolling NURS 710 & NURS 713. The student will discuss their project and Project Team with their Chair. Once all questions are addressed and the potential Preceptor and Expert are reviewed by the Project Chair, students will be required to complete DNP Project Team Agreement. The DNP Project Team Agreement requires signatures of all members of the Project Team. Once all signatures are collected, the form will be submitted for final review to the DNP Project Chair, who will then forward to the Director of Graduate Studies for final approval. The DNP Academic Counselor will provide instructions for registering in the appropriate section.

PRECEPTOR SELECTION

Each student will select a Preceptor related to his or her area of interest and planned DNP project. DNP prepared Preceptors who are subject matter experts for the student's project area are preferred. However, other professionals with advanced degrees and/or experience and recognition as experts in their field may be considered. Such experts may come from business, education, administration, and health care. The Preceptor must possess the expertise to offer rich experiences that will enable the student to meet course objectives and project goals.

PRECEPTOR ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

The DNP Preceptor is an important part of the student’s project and will be a member of the DNP Project Team. The student’s Preceptor will provide the student with guidance throughout the project and practicum experience. Due to the importance of this mentor to the student’s DNP project success, it is required that the student submit a Preceptor Profile including the Preceptor’s current resume or curriculum vitae, evidence of licensure, and evidence of advance practice certification (if applicable) for approval to the student’s DNP Project Chair. Ideally, this profile should be submitted with the student’s site and Preceptor application by the aforementioned deadlines, or no later than the semester prior to beginning the practicum experiences.

The Preceptor’s responsibilities include the following:

- Serve as a member of the student’s DNP Project Team
- Collaborate with NIU faculty to promote the student’s successful achievement of practicum objectives and project completion
- Provide orientation to the practicum site environment, policies and procedures
- Recommend and identify appropriate experiential opportunities congruent with course learning outcomes and student needs
- Act as mentor for student’s professional development
- Provide supervision and constructive feedback for student’s nursing practice
- Refrain from disclosure of all protected personal student information other than exempted by previous agreement or law
- Refrain from unlawful discrimination on any basis
- Provide timely feedback and communication with NIU faculty, including attendance at doctoral committee meetings

PROJECT TEAM EXPERT ROLE

The DNP Project Team “expert role” functions as a professional subject matter expert, who is willing and committed to sharing expertise for the student’s DNP project. The Expert should possess a master’s degree or higher in the discipline most assistive in the student’s project development, implementation, and evaluation. With faculty approval, the student may choose an Expert from academia, business, practice, or health care settings among others. Examples include Experts in the practicum topic, project design, quantitative or qualitative research, and data analysis.

DNP PROJECT SITE GUIDELINES

It is the student’s responsibility to select a project site that facilitates the project planning, implementation, and evaluation. Students are to complete the DNP Project Site Planning Form and submit to the DNP Academic Counselor by deadline. See Appendix A.

DNP PROJECT SITE REQUIREMENTS

- The selected site must be a healthcare or nursing institution that is related to the approved DNP project. Examples include: hospitals, clinics, skilled nursing facilities, rehabilitation centers, counseling centers, mental health facilities, or home health care agencies
- The site may be a place of employment if there is no conflict of interest and the student is not performing project hours during his or her assigned work time. Students must demonstrate separation of academic hours and work hours
- The student must have an active unrestricted professional registered nurse licensure and advanced practice nurse licensure (if applicable) in the state where the DNP project is conducted
- Prior to beginning the DNP project, the student must confirm the following documents are up to date in CastleBranch: liability insurance, background check, drug screening, immunization, proof of health insurance, HIPAA training, blood borne pathogens training, and CPR training (the student should refer to the Graduate Nursing Student Handbook for details)
- A written site agreement is required between NIU and the practicum site before the student can begin working on their project. Students are required to complete and submit the Site and Preceptor Application, submitted to the DNP Academic Counselor one year prior to beginning the DNP project and practicum courses (NURS 710 & NURS 713). Any delay in completing and successfully submitting these documents may delay the project and progression in the program
- Direct any questions regarding site selection and requirements to the DNP Academic Counselor

Helpful Site Selection Tips
- Network with clinical professionals and organizations in areas of nursing or healthcare interest
- Consider and approach an employer (see requirements)
- Consider job advancement or potential employers.
- Contact the DNP Academic Counselor early, if having difficulty with site selection.
DNP PRACTICUM LOG GUIDELINES

Practicum documentation is completed via Typhon. This platform provides the DNP student the opportunity to document selected competencies and practicum activities completed throughout each practicum course to demonstrate meeting course and project objectives. Students are required to complete 576 practicum hours (192 hours over three semesters). During the DNP project and practicum experiences, the student will keep track of activities completed and enter these hours and activities into their Typhon documentation. Practicum faculty will review entries weekly, approve documentation, and offer feedback in practicum courses (713, 723, and 733).

TYPHON ORIENTATION

Students who are not familiar with the Typhon documentation system may schedule a time to speak with the Graduate Internship Coordinator regarding orientation to Typhon.

PREPARING THE DNP LOG

- Student will receive login information for Typhon from the Graduate Internship Coordinator
- Students may log practicum activities that are consistent with the activities listed on pages five and six. The student’s practicum log will be graded based on the submitted practicum activities, quality of self-assessment, number of hours completed, and the use of professional language and grammar expected from a doctoral candidate. The student is encouraged to ask the DNP Academic Counselor or course faculty (DNP Project Chair) questions regarding Typhon documentation.
- Students will submit their time under the “Time Logs” section in the Typhon documentation system. All practicum hours must be completed during the practicum course (192 total).
DNP PROJECT COURSES

The following courses are designed for development, planning, implementation, and dissemination of the DNP project.

**NURS 710 PROJECT I: SEMINAR**

Assessment and planning of the DNP Project to address an emerging or current healthcare practice problem or issue in a specific healthcare setting. Development of a proposal to implement a system wide healthcare policy, service, or practice innovation that contributes to evidence-based practices or quality improvement at a local, regional, or national level. Activities focused on refinement of the issue statement, analysis of background, knowledge synthesis, and detailed planning for implementation and evaluation. Formal defense of a final written project proposal.

**NURS 713 PROJECT I: PRACTICUM**

Practice experiences, practice hours and collaborative partnerships in a healthcare setting for purposes of assessing and planning the DNP and affording practice opportunities to apply, integrate and synthesize the DNP Essentials. DNP Project planning activities will focus on: changes that impact healthcare outcomes with a systems or population focus, demonstrate practice implementation, a plan for real sustainability and evaluation, and a foundation for future practice scholarship.

**NURS 720 PROJECT II: SEMINAR**

Implementation of the proposed DNP Project to address a specific healthcare issue through a system-wide intervention in a healthcare setting. Focused discussion, problem solving, and collaboration to facilitate project implementation and completion.

**NURS 723 PROJECT II: PRACTICUM**

Practice experiences, practice hours and collaborative partnerships in a healthcare setting for purposes of implementing the DNP Project and affording practice opportunities to apply, integrate and synthesize the DNP Essentials. DNP project activities will focus on implementing the proposed plan while collaborating with stakeholders, and developing strategies to obviate unforeseen barriers to project implementation.

**NURS 730 PROJECT III: SEMINAR**

Evaluation and reporting of the DNP Project to address a specific healthcare issue through a system-wide intervention in a healthcare setting. Focus of activities will be on discussion, collaboration to facilitate project evaluation, and final reporting. Oral defense of the project will be followed by dissemination to the target healthcare setting.

**NURS 733 PROJECT III: PRACTICUM**

Practice experiences, practice hours and collaborative partnerships in a healthcare setting for purposes of evaluating the DNP Project and affording practice opportunities to apply, integrate and synthesize
the *DNP Essentials*. DNP project activities will focus on final analysis of outcome data, collaborating with stakeholders, and developing strategies to address unforeseen barriers during evaluation.
DNP PROJECT PROPOSAL

PROJECT PROPOSAL PROCESS

Students will develop and submit their project proposal during NURS 710: Project I Seminar. Students should have an idea of potential projects upon acceptance to the NIU DNP Program. The broad focus of the DNP project can include a number of health care issues and policies that could directly or indirectly affect target populations. The student’s DNP project will be designed to investigate a healthcare issue, synthesize scholarship, and implement change an area of advanced practice.

The following is the process for completing the DNP project proposal (in NURS 710):

1. The student will write and submit their DNP project proposal during NURS 710
2. The DNP project proposal must be reviewed by the DNP Project Preceptor
3. The DNP project proposal will be submitted to NURS 710 faculty for grading and approval
4. After completion of steps 1-3, students will submit their proposal to their DNP Project Chair for approval
5. Once approval from the DNP Project Chair is obtained, it will be submitted to the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies for final approval

Once students have received final approval of their DNP project, the DNP Project Chair must approve any changes.
DNP PROJECT EVALUATION

EVALUATION METHODS
As the DNP student progresses through their project and practicum courses, the student will collaborate with their DNP Project Team to develop an evidenced based project and create a comprehensive manuscript suitable for publishing, an oral defense, and a public oral poster presentation.

WRITTEN DNP PROJECT
The written DNP project will be finalized and submitted in NURS 730, however it is a compilation of work completed throughout NURS 710, 713, 720, and 723. The written DNP project will be a comprehensive manuscript suitable for publishing.

ORAL PRESENTATION AND DEFENSE
In the final didactic course, NURS 730, the student will prepare and give a final oral presentation and defense of their DNP project to their Project Team, project stakeholders, and other select faculty at Northern Illinois University.

POSTER PRESENTATION
The student will be required to prepare and present a public poster presentation. Visual presentations are a key component of communicating the student’s research and findings of the student’s DNP project and an important element for completing the student’s doctoral coursework.

EVALUATION PROCESS
Evaluation of the final DNP project is the responsibility of the faculty. The evaluation panel will include at least 5 members which should be comprised of the student’s DNP Project Team, the Chair of the School of Nursing or the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies, and at least one additional faculty member. The evaluation panel will be responsible for completing the DNP rubric for each student. Additionally, evaluation will include peer and stakeholder input, which is important to ensure rigor, applicability, and impact of the DNP project work.
## APPENDIX A
### DEADLINES

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<th>Content Area</th>
<th>Fall Practicum</th>
<th>Spring Practicum</th>
<th>Summer Practicum</th>
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<td>Selection of a project site and Project Preceptor one year in advance of beginning the student’s practicum experiences (NURS 710/713). Submit site and Preceptor Planning Form to DNP Academic Counselor.</td>
<td>September 1 – November 1</td>
<td>January 1 – March 1</td>
<td>June 1 – August 15</td>
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<td><strong>Student to CONTACT their DNP Project Chair by EMAIL</strong> to set up meeting to discuss DNP project and DNP Project Team and receive approval to proceed with completing DNP Project Team Agreement.</td>
<td>Recommend meeting with DNP Project Chair within 2 weeks of Chair assignment.</td>
<td>Recommendation for meeting within 2 weeks of assignment.</td>
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<td><strong>Student to submit DNP Project Team Agreement to DNP Project Chair.</strong></td>
<td>End of week 8 the semester before the practicum</td>
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The student must complete and submit their project site planning form one year prior to beginning the seminar and practicum experiences (NURS 710 & NURS 713). The student will submit this form via email to the DNP Academic Counselor. If the student has any questions, please contact the DNP Academic Counselor.

I. STUDENT INFORMATION

STUDENT NAME: Z-ID:
EMAIL ADDRESS: Phone:
ADDRESS:

II. PRACTICUM INFORMATION

ANTICIPATED SEMESTER & YEAR OF ENROLLMENT:
SITE NAME:
SITE ADDRESS:
SITE CONTACT: TITLE:
CONTACT PHONE: EMAIL:
IS THE STUDENT EMPLOYED BY THE SITE: ☐ YES ☐ NO
IS THE PREFECTOR EMPLOYED BY THE SITE: ☐ YES ☐ NO

III. PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

Please briefly discuss below how the student’s selected site will allow the student to meet the student’s project outcomes and course objectives for NURS 713, 723, and 733.

Site Approved ☐
DNP Academic Counselor: _______________________________ Date: ____________
The student must complete the electronic Preceptor Planning Form one year prior to beginning the seminar and practicum experiences (NURS 710 & NURS 713). The student will submit this form via email to the DNP Academic Counselor. The student must submit a copy of the Preceptor’s CV along with this form. If the student has any questions, they are advised contact the DNP Academic Counselor. Students must include the DNP Project Preceptor’s CV with the Preceptor Planning Form.

I. STUDENT INFORMATION

STUDENT NAME: Z-ID:
EMAIL ADDRESS: PHONE:
ADDRESS:

II. PRECEPTOR INFORMATION

PRECEPTOR NAME (AS IT APPEARS ON LICENSE):
DEGREES HELD: CREDENTIALS:
EMAIL ADDRESS: PHONE:
SITE NAME & ADDRESS:
FAX:

PRECEPTORS PREFERRED METHOD OF CONTACT (for receiving documents):
☐ EMAIL  ☐ MAIL  ☐ FAX

PRECEPTOR’S INTERESTS:

Preceptor CV attached ☐
Preceptor Approved ☐

DNP Academic Counselor: ___________________________ Date: ________________
Before week 8, the semester prior to enrolling in NURS 710 & NURS 713, Students will begin completion of the DNP Project Team Agreement by meeting with their assigned Project Chair to discuss their DNP project and DNP Team. Students will then complete this form by obtaining signatures from both the DNP Project Preceptor and DNP Project Expert. Finally, this signed form will be submitted to the DNP Project Chair for review, signature, and will then be forwarded to the Director of Nursing Graduate studies for final approval. Confirmation of CV must be documented before this form will be submitted to the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies. If the student has any questions, they are advised to contact the DNP Academic Counselor.

**STUDENT & DNP PROJECT INFORMATION**

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<td>DNP PROJECT TITLE:</td>
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**DNP PROJECT PRECEPTOR**

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**DNP PROJECT EXPERT**

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<td>CLINICAL INTERESTS/BACKGROUND:</td>
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*After obtaining signatures from the DNP Project Preceptor and DNP Project Expert, please submit this agreement to your DNP Project Chair.*
DNP PROJECT CHAIR

PROJECT CHAIR NAME:

CREDENTIALS:

EMAIL ADDRESS: Phone:

PROJECT CHAIR SIGNATURE / DATE: __________________________________________________

Team Approved □

Director of Nursing Graduate Studies: ________________________ Date: ______________
The student’s DNP project proposal will be submitted in NURS 710 and must be approved by the student’s course faculty, DNP Project Preceptor and DNP Project Chair. Once these approvals have been obtained, the student’s proposal will be submitted to the Director of Nursing Graduate Studies for final approval. Failure to obtain approval of the student’s project could result in delaying progress in the DNP program.

STUDENT INFORMATION

STUDENT NAME: Z-ID:
EMAIL ADDRESS: Phone:
ADDRESS:

DNP PROJECT PROPOSAL

Describe the healthcare issue or problem:
Identify the practicum practice area:
Identify the system level for the problem/issue:

PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, EVALUATION

DNP PROJECT FRAMEWORK:
*Please add expanded framework as appendix.*

DNP PROJECT METHODS:

WHAT EVIDENCE MUST BE COLLECTED:

DNP PROJECT QUESTION (as developed in NURS 710)
**Project Approved □**

NURS 710 Faculty: ____________________________ Date: __________

DNP Project Preceptor: ____________________________ Date: __________

DNP Project Chair: ____________________________ Date: __________

Director of Nursing Graduate Studies: ____________________________ Date: __________